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1961/03/01

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1 March 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Plans) CIO/DO/CIO/DO

SUBJECT: Project [REDACTED]

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1. A number of recent events have brought into focus what we need to do vis a vis [REDACTED] in the immediate future. These events are:

a. Jake Esterline's talk with Senator Smathers.

b. A comment by Paul Nitze to me on 28 February to the effect that as far as he was concerned, we should go ahead and do it.

c. The diversionary effect of recent flurries in the [REDACTED]

d. The continuation of indecision as far as decision is concerned in the State Department.

2. In view of the above and in view of the passage of valuable time, I am convinced that we have got to take a very strong stand as to what we would like to have happen sometime next week. At that point the JCS visiting committee report will be in, which I understand is reasonably favorable though we may have to negotiate on one or two points; Berlin will be back and I can only guess from the reports out of Brazil that his trip will tend to support Tom Mann; and we will have what I hope will be the benefits of the Ailes visit from Guatemala. No, as you know, reaches Washington on 2 March.

3. In view of the political difficulties involved in a favorable decision and in view of Tom Mann's continued opposition and apparent growing strength with the White House (see Smathers), there is no doubt in my mind that our only chance is to be very firm in our position and heavily strong in urging the need for the proposed action. This means, as I see it, persuading the Boss that this must be done. I recognize the natural reluctance towards pushing for a policy conclusion but merely pushing does not mean that we are trying to assume the policy role but only that we are willing to stand up and be counted on what we consider the proper decision.

STATE/L.Smith/Cuba 61-63
reopened Apr 95
18 Apr 95 Doc.# 51-3 pp.

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4. In addition to the importance of being firm ourselves, I think that we should consider making the best possible use of potential supporters like Senator Smathers. What I have in mind here is either the Boss or you should get in touch personally with Smathers, discuss the whole problem on a personal basis, be candid about the difficulty of the decision that must be made, tell him quite frankly that we propose to push hard for approval and ask his advice as to what he could suggest to get the desired result. In the first place, there is no better way to obtain an ally than to ask him a favor. In the second place, Smathers is clearly strong in the White House. In the third place, Smathers can help us enormously on the Hill if we need some allies in the future should something go wrong.

5. In addition to the above, I think that before making the final pitch to the Summit, you should have a very frank talk with Mac Bundy, explaining not only the need for decision but laying it on hard as to why we feel a favorable decision for the Project is the best solution.

6. I would also hope that you would have an informal but very candid talk with Lemnitzer. This would, of course, depend to some extent on negotiating the points mentioned above which may come out of the JCS visiting committee report. I have no doubt, as I have already said, that we can do this. Strong support from Lemnitzer unquestionably will materially improve our prospects.

7. I recognise that one aspect of this whole problem is still unresolved, i.e., the Cuban Provisional Government. At the moment, I gather that this may not be going too well. Possibly a blow-up of this aspect would require us to change our approach. I am optimistic, however, that some sort of an acceptable result can be fashioned and, in the meantime, it should not affect our plans for trying to get approval.

8. Inherent in the foregoing is a recognition also that approval does not have to be exclusively to the original tactical plan. I still feel that it is a very good one but changes in facts, such as repositioning of the Cuban militia, can require variations. What

I am really aiming at [REDACTED] approval for the best possible use of the Cubans now in Guatemala. This includes, of course, as a fall-back position, an effort to have the whole operation taken over by Ydigoras (with our "unofficial" help, of course) in case we receive an adamant refusal to continue as presently planned. I feel very strongly that dissolution, even if it is feasible, is not an acceptable solution. You know the reasons as well as I, so I will not go into them.

C. Tracy Barnes

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TRANSCRIPTION FOLLOWS

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SUBJECT: Project [excised]

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- b. A comment by Paul Nitze to me on 28 February to the effect that as far as he was concerned, we should go ahead and do it.
- c. The diversionary effect of recent flurries in the [excised]
- d. The continuation of looseness as far as decision is concerned in the State Department.

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